To Tell the Truth

A Native American Cinderella Tale

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN
Leveled Readers

retold by Alexandra Behr
illustrated by Arvis Stewart

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HOUGHTON MIFFLIN BOSTON

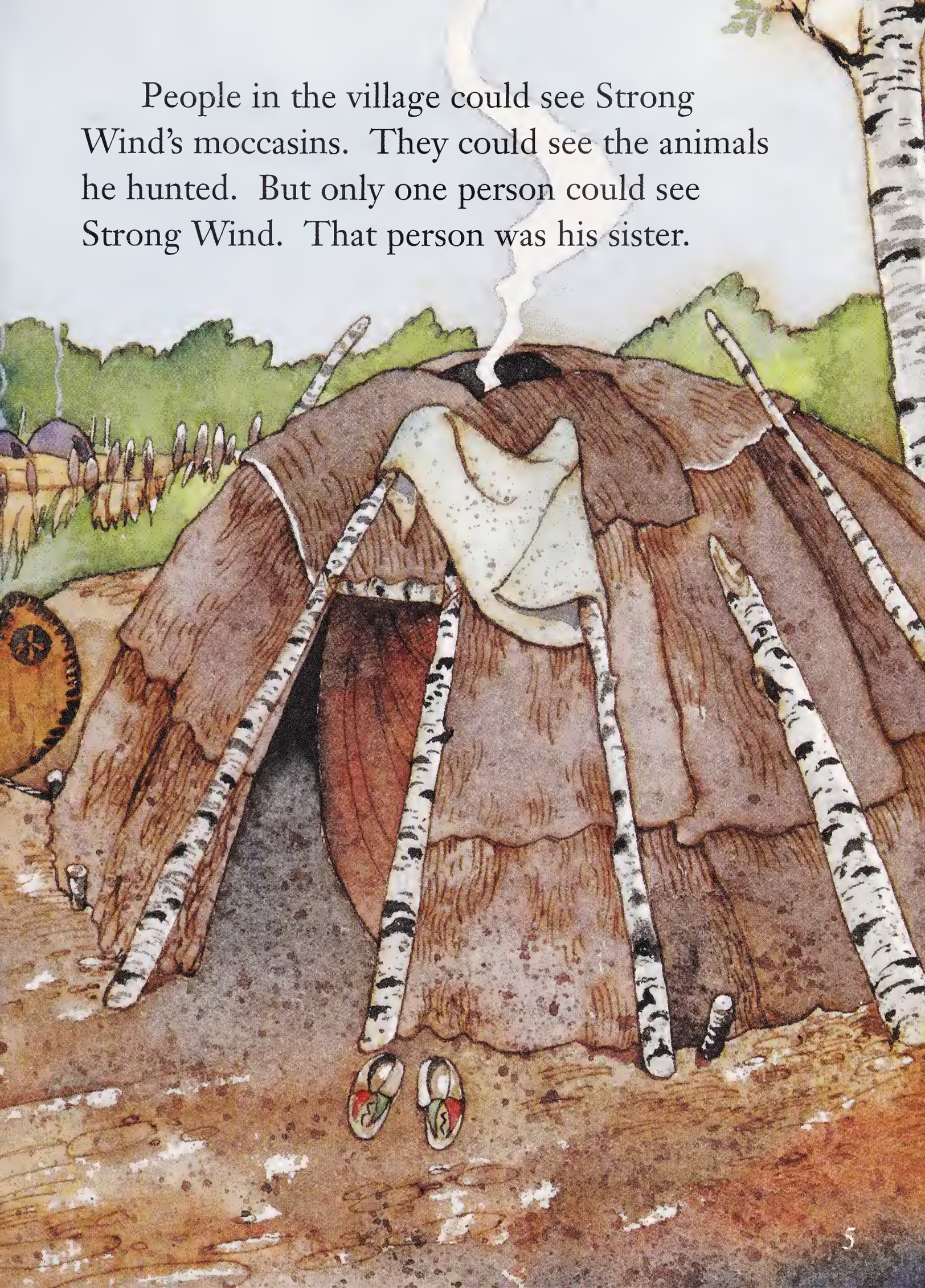
Long ago, there was a village by the lake. A father and his three daughters lived in the village.

Each day the father went to hunt. When their father was away, the two older girls made the youngest daughter do all the work. She had to cook and clean and get wood for the fire.

One day the youngest girl was very tired from all of her work. She was so tired she fell asleep near the fire. Her dress was burned. The ashes made her dirty. Her sisters laughed and called her Smudge-Face.

An important man lived on the other side of the lake. His name was Strong Wind. He lived in a wigwam with his sister.

People in the village could see Strong Wind's moccasins. They could see the animals he hunted. But only one person could see Strong Wind. That person was his sister.



One day, Strong Wind's sister said to the people in the village, "My brother wants to marry. He will only marry a girl who tells the truth. The first girl who answers my questions truthfully can marry him."

The next day, the oldest sister put shells in her hair and wore her best robe. She went to see Strong Wind's sister.

"Can you see Strong Wind in his canoe?" Strong Wind's sister asked.

"Yes," said the oldest sister.

"What is his bowstring made of?" she asked.

"Deer skin," the oldest sister lied.

"Go home," said Strong Wind's sister. "You did not tell the truth. You cannot see my brother."

The next day, the middle sister brushed her hair and put on her best robe. Then she went to see Strong Wind's sister.

"Can you see Strong Wind in his canoe?" Strong Wind's sister asked.

"Yes," said the middle sister.

"What is his hunting sled made of?" Strong Wind's sister asked.

"Grass from the lake," said the middle sister.

"Go home," said Strong Wind's sister. "You did not tell the truth. You cannot see my brother."

The next day, Smudge-Face said, "I will go to see Strong Wind's sister."

"You cannot do that," said her sisters. "You must stay here and clean!" Smudge-Face did not answer. She started to clean.

After she finished cleaning, Smudge-Face ran to the other side of the lake to see Strong Wind's sister.

"Can you see Strong Wind in his canoe?" asked Strong Wind's sister.

"Oh, yes," said Smudge-Face.

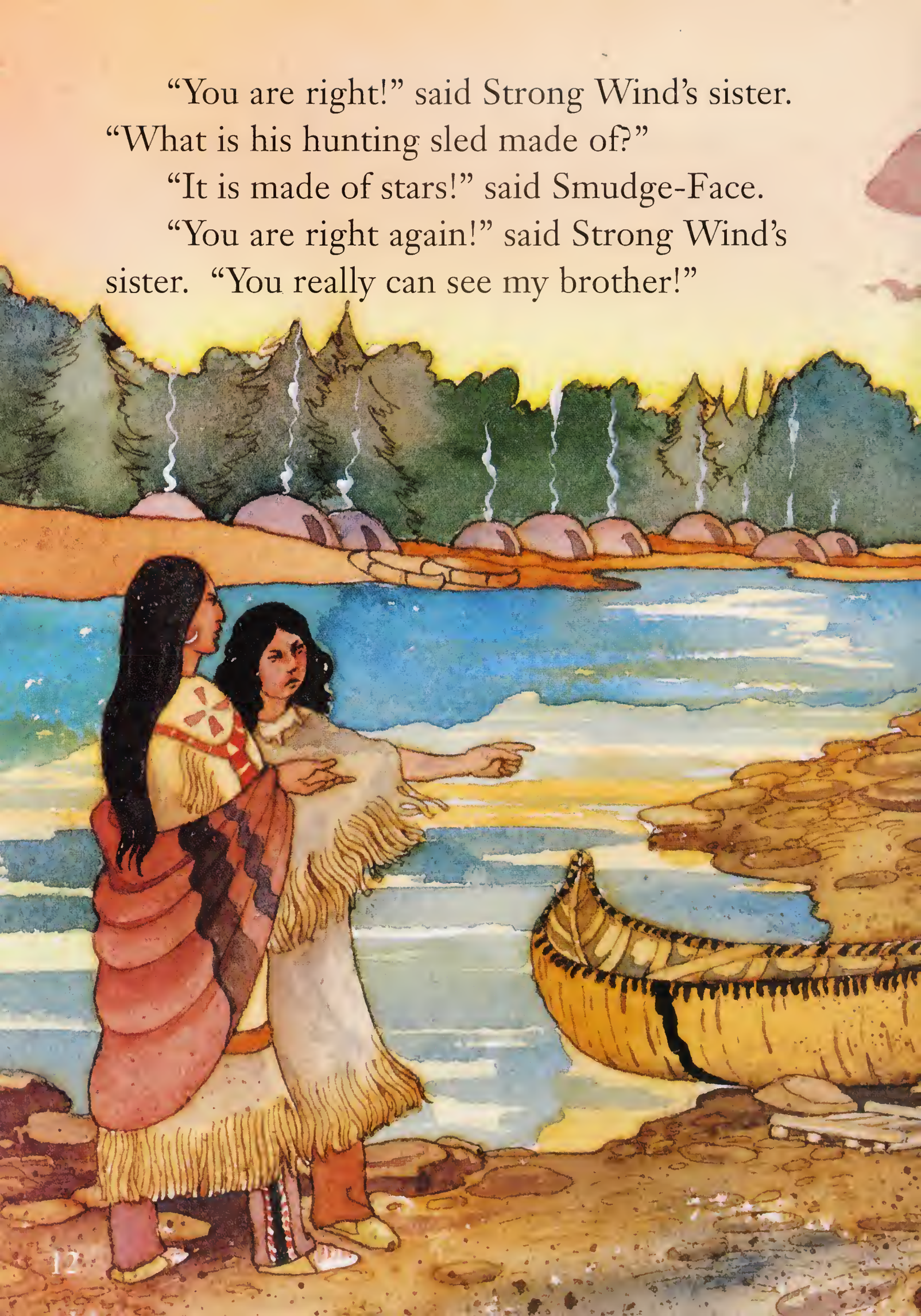
"What is his bowstring made of?" Strong Wind's sister asked.

"It is a rainbow!" said Smudge-Face. "It is very beautiful."

"You are right!" said Strong Wind's sister. "What is his hunting sled made of?"

"It is made of stars!" said Smudge-Face.

"You are right again!" said Strong Wind's sister. "You really can see my brother!"



Strong Wind's sister cleaned Smudge-Face's hands and face. She gave her a soft robe to put on. She put moccasins on her feet. Then she brushed her black hair and gave her a shell necklace.

"Thank you," said Smudge-Face. "You are kind."

Strong Wind came to see Smudge-Face. "You saw me," said Strong Wind. "You told the truth. Your long hair blows in the wind like a raven's wing. I will call you Raven Wing. Tomorrow we will marry." And Strong Wind smiled at Smudge-Face.

The next day Strong Wind and Raven Wing married. They lived happily ever after.

Responding

Think About the Selection

1. Why did Strong Wind marry Smudge-Face?

2. Why do you think the two older sisters did not tell the truth?

3. Which events from the story could happen in real life? Which events could never happen in real life?

Making Connections This story is a fairy tale. Compare *To Tell the Truth* to the story *Cinderella* or to another fairy tale you have read. How are the stories similar? How are they different?

Focus on Genre

Focus on Fairy Tales

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